

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Mike Osborne: Federal Triangle*

June 15 – August 31, 2019

Opening reception: Saturday, June 15, 6–8pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Federal Triangle*, an exhibition of black-and-white photographs by Mike Osborne—the artist's first presentation at the gallery.

A policeman uses a stick to examine a backpack and body armor abandoned on the street, the Pentagon emerges from behind the clouds through an airplane window, a layer of fresh snow blankets an idyllic white mansion (which turns out to be Dick Cheney's home): whether or not a sinister narrative actually underpins the mundane scenes from Mike Osborne's newest body of work, these pictures evoke a smoldering paranoia familiar to even the most casual consumers of news.

The institutions implied by the title of the show represent much of the policy and messaging that shapes our understanding of Americanism today. The "paranoid style" described in a 1964 article by Richard Hofstadter—which looks at conspiracy theories and movements of suspicious discontent throughout American history—continues to be relevant, now that division and discontent are two major hallmarks of the current political era.

In developing this body of work, Osborne filtered his own experiences through the lens of a paranoid:

Federal Triangle is a series of photographs I shot in and around Washington DC in recent years. Titled after a government complex wedged between the Capitol and the White House, the project depicts DC as a kind of bureaucratic Bermuda Triangle—an impenetrable place of mystery, danger, and disorientation.

Prior to beginning this project, I lived in DC and taught at Georgetown University for a period of several years. Early in my time there, brief encounters with the trappings of power became a point of fascination. Black Suburbans idled behind townhomes. Chauffeurs killed time on corners next to cars bearing diplomatic plates. In the wake of a terror incident halfway around the world, I came across a landscaping crew lined up in an alley. Like airplane passengers who had drawn extra scrutiny, they held out bags of compost and mulch for inspection by a man wielding a metal detecting wand. John Kerry's house, I was told.

Later, I moved a mile up the road to an apartment building at the top of Mount Alto in Glover Park. My living room, like the set of *Rear Window*, aligned squarely with the residential block of the sprawling Russian Embassy. A neighbor's wifi connection saluted them ("Hi Russians"). The view was banal but intriguing. I never closed my blinds.

Early on in the work, on an overcast weekend afternoon, I set up my field camera in a Crystal City parking lot and pointed it at a mid-rise building whose blank facade seemed to epitomize the area adjacent to Reagan Airport. After I made the exposure and was packing my camera and tripod into the trunk of my car, two men in camouflage bounded across the parking lot. Did I realize I was on government property? That my car, sufficiently packed with explosives, could have brought the neighboring Marriott toppling down onto their building? I had not realized these things. Before we parted ways, one of them noted that there were other, less generous security officers out there. Some guys who worked on the roof of the Pentagon, not far away, were very uptight and very sorry they never had an opportunity to use their weapons.

These kinds of encounters gave rise to a range of questions that helped to shape the parameters of the work. If I were particularly prone to paranoid interpretations, what subjects might activate my darker conspiratorial fears and fantasies? If I felt especially dispossessed, what scenes and situations would evoke the paradoxical feeling of being close to—yet far removed from—the levers of power? *Federal Triangle* engages these kinds of questions in pictorial terms. Everyday scenes are tinged with the possibility of violence and conspiracy. Withholding more than they reveal, the pictures invite projections that speak to the fear, doubt, dysfunction, and absurdity of the current moment in American political life.

Mike Osborne lives and works in Austin. His second book, *Federal Triangle*, will be released summer 2019. He has had solo exhibitions at Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart), Artpace San Antonio, Houston Center for Photography, and Stanford Art Gallery. He has participated in shows at Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum (San Antonio), Contemporary Austin—Laguna Gloria, Harry Ransom Center (Austin), Lawndale Art Center (Houston), and Vanderbilt University. His work is in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia (Charlottesville), Kerr Arts and Cultural Center (Kerrville), and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.